



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SDNG TO DEDICATE MEMORIAL TO HONOR WAR FALLEN

The South Dakota National Guard will dedicate a new memorial plaza to honor 171 fallen SDNG members who died in various wars or conflicts since the organization's formation in 1862. The event will take place Saturday, Sept. 8, at 2 p.m. at Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid in Rapid City.

The public is invited to attend a ceremony which pays tribute to the service and sacrifice of these fallen heroes who were active members of the SDNG and died while deployed during federal service.

The memorial plaza includes a metallic globe, stone wall and metal plaques, which will be unveiled, with the names of all known soldiers who lost their lives during the Spanish-American War/Philippine Insurrection, World War I, World War II, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Planned speakers for the ceremony include South Dakota Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, Rapid City Mayor Steve Allen-der and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG.

Members of the public can access Camp Rapid through the northwest gate located at 2823 West Main Street and should arrive by 1:30 p.m. to allow for traffic flow and parking.

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VETERANS TOWN HALL

WITH SIOUX FALLS VA LEADERSHIP

SEPT. 5, 2018, 9:00 AM

SENIOR CENTER, 1303 7TH AVE., ABERDEEN

**CATCH UP ON VA NEWS; ASK QUESTIONS; SHARE YOUR IDEAS
ABOUT VA, VETERANS CARE, BENEFITS & SERVICE**

QUESTIONS, CALL 605-333-6889

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

SDVSOA LEADERSHIP

This week during the annual SDDVA Benefits School, members of the South Dakota Veterans Service Officers Association elected their leadership. Officers for 2018-2019 are as follows:

- President—Doug Huntrods (Meade County)
- Vice President—Aaron Walberg (Brown County)
- Secretary/Treasurer—Susan Irons (Lincoln and Union Counties)
- Judge Advocate—Dennis Evenson (Deuel County)
- District I Representative—Courtney VanZanten (Lake County)
- District II Representative—Ron Hoffer (Edmunds County)
- District III Representative—Michael McDonald (Yankton County)
- District IV Representative—David Dodson (Pennington County)
- District V Representative—Jeri Opsahl (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)

The primary purpose of the SDVSOA is to promote and further the work of all Tribal and County Veterans Service Officers in the State of South Dakota.

VA AND WALGREENS COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE VETERANS CARE

As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to improve care coordination for veterans, the department is working with pharmacy services provider Walgreens to coordinate patient and pharmaceutical care for VA-enrolled patients.

With the click of a button, VA providers will be able to see the entire medication and immunization history of VA-enrolled patients who receive their prescription and immunization needs at Walgreens.

"This arrangement is the first of its kind and it's a strong collaboration," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Partnerships like this will help the VA continue to improve the way we care for veterans."

As it expands its community care program, the VA actively refines its ability to track medication prescribed by community providers. Prior to the arrangement, VA providers would ask patients to inform them about medications filled at Walgreens. With the VA-Walgreens exchange, VA providers can now easily view medications directly that are prescribed to VA-enrolled patients by community providers and filled at Walgreens pharmacies.

For the past five years, VA and Walgreens have partnered to provide flu shots at no cost for enrolled veterans, improving vaccination rates and access to immunizations.

VA exchanges standards-based medical information securely and electronically with participating community health care partners, such as Walgreens, to ensure the best possible care coordination and medication management. Currently, the VA exchanges health information with over 170 community health care partners, representing 1,288 hospitals, 537 Federally Qualified Health Centers, 261 nursing homes, 8,649 pharmacies (including over 8,000 Walgreens pharmacies) and over 22,431 clinics.

Additional information about the VA Health Information Exchange Program can be found online at www.va.gov/vler.

SDVSOA MAKES CONTRIBUTION TO STATE CEMETERY FUND

This week during the annual SDDVA Benefits School, members of the South Dakota Veterans Service Officers Association held a fundraiser for the state veterans cemetery. The "poker run" that was held during the annual vendor night garnered a total contribution of \$505.

Craig Bennett, Davison County Veterans Service Officer was the winner of the poker run and donated his winnings back to the cemetery endowment fund.

Bennett and SDVSOA President Doug Huntrods presented the funds to Stephanie Judson of the South Dakota Community Foundation.



CARPENTER NAMED PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Sheila Carpenter has been named the 2018 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Partner of the Year. Carpenter was recognized by her peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 20, in Pierre.

Sheila Carpenter, veterans service claims assistant for Hughes, Stanley, and Sully Counties, was awarded the 2018 Partner of the Year award for her compassion, commitment, knowledge and professionalism when assisting South Dakota's veterans.

"Sheila Carpenter is excellent in her role as claims assistant," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "The reality is she is excellent in all that she does whether it is working with veterans and their families or volunteering in her community."

Carpenter's office serves over 1,500 veterans in Hughes, Stanley and Sully counties.



WALBERG NAMED CTVSO OF THE YEAR

Aaron Walberg of Aberdeen has been named the 2018 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs "County/Tribal Veterans Service Officer of the Year." Walberg was recognized by his peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 20, in Pierre.

Aaron Walberg, veterans service officer for Brown County, was awarded the 2018 County and Tribal Veterans Service Officer of the Year award for his knowledge of federal and state regulations governing veteran's benefits, as well as quality of the claims his office files.

"Aaron Walberg, in his role as county veterans service officer, is willing to step up and give his all for helping veterans of his county, state and country." said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "His career path of son of a veteran, active duty and National Guard has given him a strong foundation to be a great leader."

Walberg's office serves over 2,500 veterans in Brown County, as well as numerous veterans from counties bordering Brown County.



MASKE NAMED SDDVA EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Michael Maske of Sioux Falls has been named the 2018 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Employee of the Year. Maske was recognized by his peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 20, in Pierre.

Mike serves as a field service officer for the Department and covers the I-29 corridor, representing over 31,000 veterans. Mike began his career with the Department in 2013 as a claims examiner and later was promoted to state veterans service officer and field service officer.

"Mike Maske lives to be the voice for veterans," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "His knowledge skills and abilities are recognized and respected by all of us. He is a welcome sight whenever he and his service dog, Gunner, appear!"



SPARROW RECOGNIZED FOR HIS OUTREACH EFFORTS

Tom Sparrow of Parker has been named the 2018 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Outreach Partner of the Year. Sparrow was recognized by his peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 20, in Pierre.

Tom Sparrow, veterans service officer for Turner County, was awarded the 2018 Outreach of the Year award for going above and beyond in his efforts to reach out to South Dakota's Veterans. He has been nicknamed "Mr. Red, White and Blue" for compassion, commitment, knowledge and professionalism when assisting South Dakota's veterans.

"Tom Sparrow is excellent in his role as county veterans service officer," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "His outreach efforts are 24/7 no matter where his travels take him. He has excelled in all our Department's operations and his duties every day."

Sparrow's office serves over 600 veterans in Turner County.



SDNG COMMISSIONS FIVE NEW ARMY LIEUTENANTS

The South Dakota Army National Guard inducted five new second lieutenants during a commissioning ceremony at Camp Rapid, Aug. 17.

The ceremony commemorated the five officers' completion of Officer Candidate School, which consisted of 16-18 months of drill weekends and two, two-week training periods.

"A lot of time, effort and hard work has been put in by each one of these candidates to get to this stage to be commissioned," said Lt. Col. Troy Ness, commander of 1st Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute). "This is just the beginning of their careers and from this point, there's going to be many more challenges and leadership opportunities."

The evening's ceremony included several traditions, including the pinning of rank on the officers' uniform, their first salute, and taking the Oath of Office led by Brig. Gen. Thomas Croymans, SDARNG assistant adjutant general.

"It's an honor for me to be here - we're looking forward to their commissioning and seeing them move on to be great leaders in the South Dakota National Guard," said Croymans. "The RTI has done a fantastic job bringing these candidates up, taking them through the course and getting them qualified; I think they're doing a fantastic job."

The commissioning officers get to choose who pins on their rank and receives their first salute, and many selected family members and military friends that have had an impact on their lives and careers. Newly promoted 2nd Lt. Leslie Wangeman chose Sgt. Maj. Phil Lakner, G3 aviation operations sergeant major for Joint Force Headquarters, for her first salute.

"Sgt. Maj. Lakner has been a huge influence for me - his actions speak louder than his words and that's the kind of leader I hope to be," said Wangeman.

The second lieutenants of OCS Class 62, their hometowns, and South Dakota Army National Guard assigned units are: 2nd Lt. Kory Bromley, Yankton, 211th Engineer Company 2nd Lt. Nicholas Dumke, Volga, Bravo Battery, 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion 2nd Lt. Mackenzie Foss, Milbank, Alpha Company, 139th Brigade Support Battalion 2nd Lt. Joshua Wangeman, Spearfish, 200th Engineer Company 2nd Lt. Leslie Wangeman, Spearfish, 842nd Engineer Company.



SDNG SOLDIERS STRENGTHEN WARFIGHTER SKILLS

A South Dakota Army National Guard unit set to deploy to the Middle East trained at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, July 27-Aug. 22.

The training is vital for improving logistics missions of moving supplies through tough, realistic joint and combined-arms scenarios in preparation for the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion's deployment scheduled for July 2019.

NTC provides a decisive action training environment, which creates training scenarios in a setting that can't be replicated at a unit's home station and that simulates what units would potentially face on their hardest day of combat overseas.

The 28-day training rotation is matched with a world-class opposing force, formed by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, which is known for their competent and ruthless enemy tactics that tests every capability of the units that come to NTC. Some of the scenarios they employ are chemical attacks, aerial attacks, base-defense operations and convoy attacks.

Between the demanding climate, terrain and an unrelenting enemy, NTC replicates the conditions Soldiers may face overseas.

The overall mission for the 152nd while at NTC was to provide multiclass logistics and support operations for the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team using subordinate units from both active duty and the National Guard specialized in ordnance disposal, transportation, signal and medical.

The opportunity to train at NTC has given soldiers of the 152nd a first-hand look at the missions they may face next year and how to overcome them.



SOCIAL SECURITY FAST-TRACKS DECISIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES

Nancy A. Berryhill, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, today announced five new Compassionate Allowance conditions: Fibrolamellar Cancer, Megacystis Microcolon Intestinal Hypoperistalsis Syndrome (MMIHS), Megalencephaly Capillary Malformation Syndrome (MCAP), Superficial Siderosis of the Central Nervous System, and Tetrasomy 18p. Compassionate Allowances is a program to quickly identify medical conditions and serious diseases that meet Social Security's standards for disability benefits.

"For nearly a decade, the Compassionate Allowance list has helped us identify and fast-track cases where individuals have diseases that are most likely to be approved for disability benefits," said Acting Commissioner Berryhill. "Social Security is committed to ensuring Americans with qualifying disabilities quickly receive the benefits they need."

The Compassionate Allowances program identifies claims where the applicant's disease or condition clearly meets Social Security's statutory standard for disability. Due to the severe nature of many of these conditions, these claims are often allowed based on medical confirmation of the diagnosis alone. To date, over 500,000 people with serious disabilities have been approved through this fast-track policy-compliant disability process. The list has grown to a total of 233 conditions, including diseases such as pancreatic cancer, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), and acute leukemia.

The agency incorporates leading technology to easily identify potential Compassionate Allowances and make quick decisions. For disability cases not covered by this program, Social Security's Health IT brings the speed and efficiency of electronic medical records to the disability determination process. When a person applies for disability benefits, Social Security must obtain medical records in order to make an accurate determination. It may take weeks for health care organizations to provide records for the applicant's case. With electronic records transmission, Social Security is able to quickly obtain a claimant's medical information, review it, and make a determination faster than ever before.

For more information about the program, including a list of all Compassionate Allowances conditions, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

To learn more about Social Security's Health IT program, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/hit. People may apply online for disability benefits by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov. To create a *my* Social Security account, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug 24-30—American Legion National Convention—Minneapolis, MN
Aug 30—Veterans Day at the State Fair (Salute to Veterans 10:30 am (CT) Freedom Stage
Sept 1—14th Annual DAV/727th Poker Run—Brookings National Guard Armory (300 5th Street S) - 10:00 am (CT)
Sept 3—Labor Day (state offices closed)
Sept 5—Veterans Town Hall—Senior Center (1303 7th Avenue) - Aberdeen—9:00 am (CT)
Sept 7—Veterans Fall Benefit Fair—Moose Lodge (516 W. 15th Avenue) - Mitchell—2:00 pm—6:00 pm (CT)
Sept 7-9—PVA North Central Chapter Trap Shoot—Crooks Gun Club
Sept 10—Doug Brown Memorial Pheasant Hunt—Top Gun Hunting Ranch—Howard
Sept 11—Improving Veterans Care Conference—BHSU (4300 Cheyenne Boulevard) - Rapid City
Sept 14—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Sept 21—7th Annual POW/MIA Program—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park (1021 W. Bailey Street) 6:30 pm (CT)
Sept 21—Veterans Stand Down—VFW (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue) - Sioux Falls—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Oct 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—Soldiers and Sailors Building—Pierre—8:00 am (CT)
Oct 12-13—DAV Fall Conference—DAV Dept. Headquarters (1519 W. 51st Street) - Sioux Falls
Nov 16—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)



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